Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method of accessing information within a directory tree structure comprising the steps of:

a. formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter;

b. accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available;

c. setting one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node; and

d. performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items.

2. (original) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the parameters are customizable and specific to the particular node.

3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim [[3]] 1 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the keyword search, the search criteria is one or more keywords input by a user.

5. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim [[3]] 1 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the hierarchical search, the search criteria is a selected one of a list of one or more directory items.

6. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim [[3]] 1 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the dichotomous key search, the search criteria is a selected one of two binary items.

7. (original) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

8. (original) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the steps of accessing a particular node, setting the search parameters, performing a parametric search are performed by a server.

9. (original) The method as claimed in claim 8 further comprising the step of establishing an internet connection with the server to perform one or more searches and utilize the parametric search.

10. (original) The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step of maintaining the node by appropriately adding and deleting data to and from the node.

11. (original) The method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the step of maintaining the node is performed by a node owner who maintains the corresponding node and all nodes that are linked beneath the corresponding node within the directory tree structure.

12. (currently amended) A research system for accessing information within a directory tree structure comprising:

a. means for formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein

each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter;

b. means for accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available;

c. means for setting one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node; and

d. means for performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items.

13. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the parameters are customizable and specific to the particular node.

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim [[14]] 12 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the keyword search, the search criteria is one or more keywords input by a user.

16. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim [[14]] 12 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the hierarchical search, the search criteria is a selected one of a list of one or more directory items.

17. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim [[14]] 12 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the dichotomous key search, the search criteria is a selected one of two binary items.

18. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

19. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the means for accessing a particular node, setting the search parameters, and performing a parametric search are performed by a server.

20. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 19 further comprising means for establishing an internet connection with the server to perform one or more searches and utilize the parametric search.

21. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 12 further comprising means for maintaining the node by appropriately adding and deleting data to and from the node.

22. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 21 wherein the means for maintaining the node is performed by a node owner who maintains the corresponding node and all nodes that are linked beneath the corresponding node within the directory tree structure.

23. (currently amended) A research system for accessing information within a directory tree structure comprising a research server configured to format a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, to access a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available, to set

one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and to perform a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items.

24. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 23 wherein the parameters are customizable and specific to the particular node.

25. (canceled)

26. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim [[25]] 23 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the keyword search, the search criteria is one or more keywords input by a user.

27. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim [[25]] 23 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the hierarchical search, the search criteria is a selected one of a list of one or more directory items.

28. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim [[25]] 23 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the dichotomous key search, the search criteria is a selected one of two binary items.

29. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 23 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

30. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 23 further comprising an interface circuit coupled to the research server to establish a connection with a computer system.

31. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 30 wherein the connection is established with the computer system at a remote location from the interface circuit.

32. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 31 wherein the connection is established with the remote computer system and the interface circuit over the internet to allow users to access the research system, to access the particular node, to set the search parameters, and to perform the parametric search.

33. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 23 further comprising a node owner for maintaining the node by appropriately adding and deleting related data to and from the node.

34. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 33 wherein the node owner maintains the corresponding node and all nodes that are linked beneath the corresponding node within the directory tree structure.

35. (currently amended) A network of devices for accessing information within a directory tree structure comprising:

a. one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems; and

b. a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, to access a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available, to set one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and to perform a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters

for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items.

36. (original) The network of devices as claimed in claim 35 wherein the parameters are customizable and specific to the particular node.

37. (canceled)

38. (currently amended) The network of devices as claimed in claim [[37]] 36 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the keyword search, the search criteria is one or more keywords input by a user.

39. (currently amended) The network of devices as claimed in claim [[37]] 36 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the hierarchical search, the search criteria is a selected one of a list of one or more directory items.

40. (currently amended) The network of devices as claimed in claim [[37]] 36 wherein when the utilized search methodology is the dichotomous key search, the search criteria is a selected one of two binary items.

41. (original) The network of devices as claimed in claim 35 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

42. (original) The network of devices as claimed in claim 35 wherein the one or more computer systems and the research server are coupled together over the internet to allow users to access the research system, to access the particular node, to set the search parameters, and to perform the parametric search.

43. (original) The network of devices as claimed in claim 35 further comprising a node owner for maintaining the node by appropriately adding and deleting related data to and from the node.

44. (original) The network of devices as claimed in claim 43 wherein the node owner maintains the corresponding node and all nodes that are linked beneath the corresponding node within the directory tree structure.

45. (currently amended) A method of accessing information within a directory tree structure comprising the steps of:

a. formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter;

b. accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search;

c. setting one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node; and

d. performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items.